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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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INFO NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000471

SIPDIS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/04/03
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: Greek Contributions to Afghanistan

REF: A) STATE 31102 B) ATHENS 417

CLASSIFIED BY: Deborah McCarthy, DCM, State, US Embassy Athens;
REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In response to ref A instruction to urge Allies and partners to provide specific support for Afghanistan, Post has reached out to a range of Greek contacts in the MFA and MOD. Ambassador spoke on April 2 with Ambassador Kostas Chalastanis, Chief of the Foreign Minister's Diplomatic Cabinet, who, without providing details, said Greece is working on both military and civilian contributions. The same day DATT and POLMIL officer met MOD diplomatic advisor Dimitris Chronopoulos, who told us that the MOD had proposed a bilat with SECDEF, and then offered details of several assistance activities the MOD hoped to relay directly to SECDEF later in April. Assistance details (see para 4) include staffing at least one OMLT, additional contributions to the Hungarian-led PRT and British/French helo fund, and moving the Greek engineering battalion to Herat. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Ambassador discussed ref A points on Afghanistan and Pakistan with head of the Foreign Minister's Diplomatic Cabinet, Ambassador Kostas Chalastanis, on April 2. Ambassador noted that the issue was not only a top priority for the U.S. but also a critical one for Greece, which now sees 25,000 Afghani migrants per year. Chalastanis agreed with this assessment and said Greece was working on a two-prong "comprehensive" package of assistance, which would include both military and other elements. He noted that Greece had a battalion of engineers in Kabul and ten officers at ISAF headquarters. In terms of new donations, he mentioned that police training was under consideration, as well as cash donations. He was either uninformed about, or unwilling to share, information, however, on what new military donations could be made. Chalastanis took on board Ambassador's points on the importance of the OSCE election mission for the Afghan elections and noted that Afghanistan would be discussed later that day in Vienna. (NOTE: We understand agreement was reached on an ODHIR election support team at the OSCE Permanent Council on April 2. END NOTE.) Ambassador concluded by noting the importance of a regional approach, which included Pakistan as well as Afghanistan. Chalastanis replied that Greece would take this into account in deciding what assistance it could offer.

¶3. (C) Separately, Defense Attache and Pol-Mil officer met April 2 with Dimitris Chronopoulos, Director General of Defense Policy and International Relations, (i.e. Diplomatic Advisor), Ministry of Defense. Defense Attache noted the pressing need for assistance in Afghanistan and asked if Greece was planning to address any of the tasks raised in earlier mil-mil bilateral meetings. Chronopoulos responded that MOD Meimerakis had proposed a late April meeting with SECDEF where he hoped to make some important announcements regarding new GOG assistance to Afghanistan. Chronopoulos stated that the GOG had provided (on a bilateral basis) over 30 million euros to Afghanistan assistance. He then provided a lengthy list of assistance efforts Greece was prepared to offer ranging from a 16-20 man OMLT to further monetary assistance. Chronopoulos said Prime Minister Karamanlis would likely announce some of the

Afghanistan assistance plans this weekend at the Strasbourg NATO Summit, and Meimerakis hoped to detail the rest during his proposed meetings with SECDEF. DATT closed by noting the importance of also supporting Pakistan, and Chronopoulos immediately attempted to call former DFM Peter Doukas, who, he said, was very close to a former Pakistani FM and who could be counted on to generate some creative thinking in the GOG.

¶4. (C) Details of current Greek MOD planning for Afghanistan assistance:

-- OMLT: MoD plans to staff a 16-20 person OMLT in the Capital Division of the Afghan National Army (Capital Division Support Kendak) with further discussion of possibly providing additional staff to either plus up the proposed OMLT or staff two smaller OMLTs. Proposed deployment by late summer 2009.

-- Lifting of Caveats: The MoD is planning to move its Engineering Battalion from Kabul to co-locate with an Italian battalion in Herat. The Greek battalion is ready to move after the summer, when they complete engineering projects in the capital region and when the Italians are ready to host them. Target date for this move: October 2009.

-- Military Training: The MOD is planning to invite an unspecified number of Afghan Army Cadets for training in the Greek military academy.

-- Additional Funding: The MoD is asking the MFA for one million euros to: a) continue its contribution to funding of the Hungarian PRT (300 thousand euros), b) contribute to the British/French "helicopter fund" (600 thousand euros), and c) other projects, TBF. The MoD is exploring ways to support individual projects in other country led PRTs in agriculture, health and local development.

-- Kabul Airport: Increase its staff at the Kabul airport to seven in anticipation of taking full responsibility for all airport

operations in Spring, 2010.

-- Elections: The MOD is planning to send two medical units of 8 doctors and medics each to support the Election Support Forces tasked with monitoring the upcoming elections.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The lack of firm details from the Greek side as reported in our conversations with Hellenic Aid (ref B), and the ambassador's conversation with MFA appears to indicate that decisions on Greek assistance to Afghanistan are not being widely coordinated but are likely being closely held by PM Karamanlis and his close confidant MOD Meimerakis. Karamanlis may take the opportunity of the NATO summit in Strasbourg to reveal some or all of these offers or the Greeks may hold some in reserve for Meimerakis' visit to Washington later this month. END COMMENT.

SPECKHARD